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ABSTRACT

Rape is believed to be one of the most underreported crimes with 3 to 10 rapes committed for every one that is reported. Rape represents an extreme behavior which can be placed on a continuum of sexual aggression defined by degrees of coercion and force. The prevalence of sexual aggression among college students nationally was examined in 3,187 female and 2,872 male college students enrolled in 32 colleges chosen for their national diversity. A self-reporting questionnaire was administered in classes which included questions on demographics, sexual experiences before and after age 14, family and social history, current behavior, and psychological characteristics. The results indicated that 15.4 percent of college women reported experiencing legal rape and 4.4 percent of college men reported perpetrating legal rape. An additional 12.1 percent of women reported having experienced attempted rape and 3.3 percent of men reported having attempted to rape someone. Virtually none of these crimes were reported and thus represent "hidden rape" not reflected in crime statistics. Men did not admit to the levels of sexual aggression that women reported. Few women reported the crime or sought victim assistance. Rates of sexual victimizaton/aggression were robust and did not vary with school size, type of institution, location, or population size. Future research should investigate conditions which lead to this violence. (ABL)

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Hidden Rape:
Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization In a National Sample of Students in Higher Education

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Abstract

Because of inadequacies in the methods used to measure sexual assault, national crime statistics, criminal victimization studies, conviction, or incarceration rates fail to reflect the true scope of rape. Studies that have avoided the limitations of these methods have revealed very high rates of overt rape and lesser degrees of sexual aggression. However, existing research has been based on samples of limited generalizability. In the present study, the Sexual Experiences Survey was administered to a national sample of 6,159 women and men enrolled in 32 institutions representative of the diversity of higher education settings across the United States. College students were studied because they include 25% of the civilian population aged 18-24, the age group with the highest risk of rape. Women's reports of experiencing and men's reports of perpetrating rape, attempted rape, sexual coercion, and sexual contact were obtained including both the rates of prevalence since age 14 and of incidence during the previous year. The findings support published assertions of high rates of "hidden rape" and other forms of sexual aggression among large normal populations such as college students. The results challenge myths that acts of sexual aggression are heinous but rare events. Instead, the potential for sexual aggression and victimization appears to be significant and real in the lives of young people.

Hidden Rape:

Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization In a National Sample of Students in Higher Education

The F.B.I. defines rape as "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her consent" and reports that 84,233 such offenses occurred in 1984 (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI],1985). However, these figures greatly underestimate the true magnitude of rape since they are based only on instances reported to police. Forcible rape is believed to be "one of the most underreported" of major crimes against the person (FBI, 1982, p. 14). Official government estimates suggest that for every rape reported, 3-10 rapes are committed but not reported (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration [LEAA], 1975). Likewise, it is difficult to obtain realistic estimates of the number of men who perpetrate rape. Only a fraction of reported rapes eventually result in conviction. Clark and Lewis (1977) suggested that after allowances are made for nonreporting, unfounding, the inability by police to acquire evidence, nonapprehension, and failure to convict; the highest justifiable proportion of actual rapists who are ever found guilty is 7%. This evidence suggests the existence of much "hidden rape" among the normal population.

Victimization studies such as the annual National Crime Survey (NCS) are the major avenue through which the true rate of crime is estimated (e.g., Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS],1984). In these studies, the residents of a standard sampling area are interviewed in their homes or by telephone and asked to indicate those crimes of which they or anyone else in their household have been victims during the previous six months. These rates of victimization are then compared to official crime statistics for the area and the rate of unreported crime is estimated. Katz and Mazur (1979) concluded on the basis of these studies that "the estimated chance of a female in the general population being raped is a minute fraction of 1%" (p. 313). The authors of the NCS observed on the basis of their research, "Rape is clearly an infrequent crime" (LEAA, 1974, p. 12) and is "the rarest of NCS measured violent offenses" (BJS, 1984, p. 5). Russell has countered, "It seems reasonable, however, to suspect that underreporting to their interviewers, rather than rare occurrence, accounts for their finding"(1984, p. 33).

In the NCS (e.g., BJS, 1984), questioning begins with items such as, "Were you knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all during the last six months?" The "screen" question to alert the interviewer to a possible rape is the following, "Did someone try to attack you in <u>some other</u> way?" An affirmative response to this item is then followed by questioning that uses the word "rape" repeatedly. Several aspects of this approach may prevent it from uncovering the

true scope of rape including: the use of a screen question that requires the subject to infer the focus of inquiry, the use of questions about sexual assault that are embedded in a context of violent crime, and the assumption that the word "rape" is used by victims of sexual assault to conceptualize their experiences.

Much has been written about the existence of a rape supportive belief system in western industrialized societies (e.g., Burt, 1980; Feild, 1978; Weis & Borges, 1973). One component of the rape supportive belief system is rape myths which are widely accepted false beliefs about rape (e.g., rapists are mentally deranged strangers; you cannot rape an unwilling woman; you cannot rape someone you know). Assaults that go against stereotypes of "real rape" often are not seen as rape. For example, among a sample of women who described assaults primarily by acquaintances that met legal definitions of rape, only 53% believed their experience qualified as rape (Koss, 1985). Placing sexual assault questions in the context of other serious crimes increases the likelihood that rape myths will be evoked and reduces the probability that victims will volunteer experiences that involved acquaintances, mild violence, and minimal physical injury.

When viewed from the vantage point of mental health research, the value of criminal victimization data is also limited. Victimization studies such as the NCS (e.g., BJS, 1984) adopt a typological approach to rape. A woman is either a rape victim or she is not a victim. For purposes of clinical research, a dimensional view of rape has been suggested (e.g., Koss & Oros, 1982; Weis & Borges, 1973). In this framework, rape represents an extreme behavior but one that is on a continuum with other forms of sexual aggression that involve increasing degrees of coercion and force. Thus, the general term "sexual aggression" includes the legal categories such as sexual contacts, sexual acts, sexual imposition, gross sexual misconduct, attempted rape, and rape. A corresponding continuum of "sexual victimization" could also be drawn to parallel male sexual aggression. A continuum is more appropriate for mental health research because it can be hypothesized that just as rape is known to have traumatic impacts on victims, slightly lesser degrees of sexual aggression could also lead to some degree of aftereffects.

The mental health relevance of victimization data is also limited by the fact that they are incidence figures, that is, they include rapes that occurred only during the preceding six month period. If a woman has been raped more than six months ago, she is not considered to be victimized. Incidence figures have a role in mental health; they indicate how many new cases of rape are occurring which is useful to estimate the need for victim assistance services and to track the impact of community wide rape prevention/education programs. Prevalence data, on the other hand, reflect the cumulative number of women who have ever been sexually victimized. Prevalence

data are required in mental health research because the aftereffects of sexual assault remain for a considerable period. In fact, post-traumatic stress disorder which victims of rape may experience is characterized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (American Psychiatric Association, 1980) as follows, "It is not unusual for the symptoms to emerge after a latency period of months or years following the trauma" (p. 237).

Recently, several estimates of the prevalence of sexual victimization have been reported. For example, Kilpatrick and colleagues (Kilpatrick, Veronen, & Best, 1984; Kilpatrick, Best, Veronen, Amick, Villeponteaux, & Ruff, 1985) conducted a criminal victimization survey via telephone of 2,004 randomly selected female residents of Charleston County, South Carolina. Because of these investigators' broad focus on crime, the sexual assault questions were presented in the context of violent crime. In their sample, 14.5% of the women disclosed one or more attempted or completed sexual assault experiences including 5% who had been victims of rape and 4% who had been victims of attempted rape. Of the women who had been raped, only 29% reported their assault to police. Russell (1984) found that 22% of a probability sample of 930 adult women residents of San Francisco described in a personal interview experiences that involved "forced intercourse or intercourse obtained by physical threat(s) or intercourse completed when the woman was drugged, unconscious, asleep, or otherwise totally helpless and unable to consent" (p. 35). Only 9.5% of these women reported their experience to the police. Another 22% of the women reported attempted rape. The incidence rate as calculated by Russell was seven times higher than that reported in the National Crime Survey (LEAA, 1977). Russell concluded, "Assuming that the Russell survey has implications for cities other than San Francisco, its findings on the incidence of rape and attempted rape provide concrete evidence of the inadequacy of current methods used to measure the magnitude of these crimes. More specifically, they suggest that the questionnaire and interviewing process employed by the National Crime Surveys need to be radically overhauled" (1984, p. 47).

Most studies of the incidence and prevalence of hidden rape have involved college students however. For example, Kanin and his associates (Kanin, 1957; Kirkpatrick & Kanin, 1957; Kanin & Parcell, 1977) found that 20-25% of college women reported forceful attempts at sexual intercourse by their dates in which the woman ended up screaming, fighting, crying or pleading. College men have also been questioned regarding their perpetration of sexual violence. Kanin (1957) found that 26% of a sample of 341 college men reported a forceful attempt to obtain sexual intercourse that caused observable distress and offense in the woman. Rapaport and Burkhart (1984) reported that 15% of a sample of 201 college men reported that they had

obtained sexual intercourse against their dates' will. Koss and colleagues (Koss, 1985; Koss & Oros, 1982; Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985) administered the self-report Sexual Experiences Survey to a sample of 2,016 women and 1,846 men midwestern university students. A virtue of this survey is that reliability and validity data are available for it (Koss & Gidycz, 1985). They found that 13% of women college students reported a victimization that involved sexual intercourse against consent obtained through the use of threatened or actual force. Only 4% of these rape victims reported their assault to the police. Another 24% of the women in the sample reported victimizations that involved forceful or coercive attempts to obtain sexual intercourse. Among men, 4.6% admitted an act of sexual aggression that met a legal definition of rape but none of them had been involved with the criminal justice system.

A difficulty with all of these studies, particularly those that have utilized college students, is that they were all based on restricted samples of subjects which has limited the extent to which results can be generalized. Nevertheless, the results have been described as "robust" (Burkhart & Stanton, in press). Despite some variation in the magnitude of estimates, all studies have produced prevalence rates that greatly exceed official estimates. To reconcile some of the differences in reported prevalence rates and to extend previous research to a national basis, the present study of students enrolled in higher education was undertaken. There are pragmatic as well as scientific reasons for studying college students. First, college students are a high risk group for rape because they are in the same age range as the bulk of rape victims and offenders. The victimization rate for females peaks in the 16-19 age group while the second highest rate occurs in the 20-24 year old group. The victimization rates for these groups are approximately 4 times higher than the mean for all women (BJS, 1984). Also, 47% of all alleged rapists who are arrested are individuals under age 25 (FBI, 1985). Approximately 65% of the higher education enrollment consists of persons 18-24 years old and 25% of all persons aged 18-24 are attending school (US Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, 1980). Second, previous research on college students has revealed high rates of acquaintance rape, a form of violence believed to be underreported in victimization surveys (BJS, 1984). Third, to obtain indepth information about life events, it is desirable to study persons for whom the recall period since the episode is relatively short.

Although the rape laws in many states are sex neutral, women victims and male perpetrators were focused on in the present study because women represent virtually 100% of reported rape victims (LEAA, 1975). Furthermore, the FBI definition of rape which is used in the victimization studies such as the NCS limits the crime of rape to female victims (BJS, 1984).

Method

The study involved administration of a self-report questionnaire to a national sample of 6,159 students enrolled in 32 institutions of higher education across the United States. The following sections describe the methods of sample design, institutional recruitment, selection of classes, questionnaire construction, validity and reliability checks, administration procedures, variable scoring, and weighting used in the study.

Sampling Plan

The sampling goals of the project were to represent the universe of the higher education student population in the United States in all its diversity--males, females, technical schools, community colleges, Ivy League schools, state universities, and so forth. No sample design could be expected to result in a purely random or representative sample, however, because the subject matter is sufficiently controversial that some schools targeted by a systematic sampling plan can be expected to refuse to participate. Thus, the object of the sampling procedure was to produce a final sample that would be as representative and as free as possible from the distortions introduced by selective participation of institutions.

Initial Decisions. Several initial decisions were made that governed subsequent decisions. First, the commitment to replicability and representativeness meant using as a sample frame all of the institutions of academic post-secondary education in the United States. Second, it was concluded that administration of the instrument had to be conducted by self-report and not in private interview. Serious problems with sample attrition and selective participation have been encountered in studies of sexual victimization and aggression that have employed a two stage sample process which involves a mass screening followed by a private interview (Ageton, 1983; Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985). For example, Koss et al., (1985) reported that only 25% of male subjects gave their permission even to be contacted for an interview on sexual topics and the rate of consent was inversely related to level of aggression. Third, administration of the questionnaire was to be conducted on-site and not by mail. The latter would have produced a strong self-selectivity bias. On-site administration in classrooms was considered to produce a more reliable representation of those asked to complete the questionnaire. Of course, completion of the form was voluntary. However, administration in the classroom with a project representative present rendered participation convenient, controlled, and as safe as possible. Fourth, it was determined that on-campus administration

should not be conducted only in those classes in which the instructor would be most likely to cooperate (i.e., psychology, sociology) since this procedure could result in an unknown bias toward certain kinds of students. Instead, the sample had to be drawn from the diversity of offerings within each institution. These requirements dictated that the sample be selected in stages. The first stage was the selection of institutions. The second stage was the selection of classes within institutions.

Selection of Institutions. The United States Department of Education (Office of Civil Rights) maintains records of the enrollment characteristics from the 3,269 institutions of higher education in the United States (Fall Enrollment and Compliance Report of Institutions of Higher Education). The Office of Civil Rights provided a copy of their information for 1980 (the latest available) on data tape to the survey consultants, Clark/Jones, Incorporated of Columbus, Ohio. On the basis of these data, the institutions in the entire nation were sorted by location in the ten Department of Education regions of the United States (i.e., Alaska, Hawaii, New England, Mideast, Great Lakes, Plains States, Southeast, Southwest, Rocky Mountain, West). Within each region, institutions were placed into homogeneous clusters according to five criteria:

(1) location inside or outside of a standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) of certain sizes (i.e., SMSA > 1,000,000; SMSA < 1,000,000; outside an SMSA)

(2) enrollment above or below the national mean percentage enrollment of minority students

(3) control of the institution by private secular, private religious, or public authority

(4) type of institution including university, other 4 year college, two year junior colleges and technical/vocational institutions

(5) total enrollment within three levels (i.e., 1,000-2,499; 2,500-9,999; >10,000)

Two sampling rules to select the schools to be recruited into the sample were developed. First, the largest institution in each region was always included. Without this rule, it would have been possible to omit the "Big Ten" or other major schools from the sample entirely. Second, every xth cluster was sampled according to the proportion of total enrollment accounted for by the region. Replacements were sought from among other schools in the homogeneous cluster if the original target proved uncooperative. Several exceptions to the sampling rules were made for the sake of reasonableness and cost constraint. First, military schools were omitted because it was felt that the type of information sought would place students in conflict with their military code. Second, schools with enrollments under 1,000 were eliminated.

There are approximately 1,000 such schools. Travel to them for exceptionally small sample numbers was not cost effective. Third, schools not in the contiguous United States were eliminated because travel funds were not sufficient. Finally, graduate schools were eliminated because post-graduate students were not intended as part of the sampled universe. The descriptive characteristics of the institutions of higher education in the United States and the number of institutions of each type that were proposed for the national sample are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Institutional Recruitment. The process of obtaining institutional cooperation began by identifying the responsible individual in the central administration. This individual was first contacted via telephone by a New York based assistant selected from among applicants with professional experience in public relations. The initial telephone contact was followed up by a mailing of information. Due to the nature of group decision making, the controversial subject matter of the study, and the large number of vacation breaks in the academic calendar, the amount of time required to obtain a decision from the institutions was very extended; some schools required 15 months to arrive at a final decision. During that period, 93 schools were contacted and 32 institutional participants were obtained. Nineteen of the institutions were first choices, the remaining 13 were solicitated from among 43 replacements. The actual institutional participants cannot be listed because they were guaranteed anonymity. However, the number of schools within each region was as follows: New England, 2; Mideast, 5; Great Lakes, 7; Plains, 3; Southeast, 7; Southwest, 4; Rocky Mountain, 1; West, 3. This distribution closely approximates the sampling plan.

It might be argued that the resulting sample would be biased toward those schools with a "liberal" administration. However, this did not prove to be the case. Some schools with the most liberal reputations in the nation refused. The types of rationale given for nonparticipation by the 61 administrations which refused were as follows: religious objections (11); concerns about subject anonymity (2); concerns about sensetionalization of the results (3); human subject concerns or human subject's disapproval (10), lack of interest (8); lack of

administrative time (6); no research allowed in classes (6); doing their own survey (3); and no reasons (12).

Inevitably, the final sample was the result of an interplay of scientific selection and head-to-head negotiation but within the limits of substitution rules requiring replacement within homogeneous clusters. The final sample of institutions was as replicable and representative a sample of postsecondary institutions in the United States as it was possible to obtain within time and budgetary limitations and given the nature of the inquiry. While sampling error cannot be measured precisely with a sample of this type, representativeness can be tested by reference to other data sources. These data will be presented in a later section.

Selection of Classes. A random selection process was used to choose target classes and alternates in the case of schedule conflicts or refusals. The only limitations on class selection were that classes under 30 students and large lecture sections were eliminated. These limitations were necessary to ensure that one experimenter's time on a campus was used efficiently while avoiding classes that were too large for one person to handle. The desired number of classes was 4 in smaller schools and 16 in larger schools. The actual number of classes visited was a mean of 7 at smaller and medium sized schools and a mean of 12 at major universities. Instructors were requested to tell the students nothing about the study and not to be present during the administration. It was felt that greater standardization of testing conditions could be achieved if the project personnel presented the description of the questionnaire to students and that the instructor's presence could be coercive upon students to participate.

Administration Procedures. The questionnaire was administered in classroom settings by 1 of 7 post-master's level clinical psychologists who participated in the project including 2 men and 5 women. All experimenters used a standard script to administer the questionnaire, and were trained by the first author to handle potential untoward effects of participation. The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover sheet that contained all the elements of informed consent. Students were asked not to sign their names on the consent form because the questionnaire was completely anonymous. Students who did not wish to participate were asked to remain in their seats and do other work. This step was taken so that persons who objected to participation would not be stigmatized. However, the rate of refusal to complete the questionnaire was negligible. Only 91 persons (1.5%) indicated that they did not wish to fill it out. After all students had finished, the group was debriefed by the experimenter according to a

prepared script. In addition, all students received a printed debriefing statement that explained the purpose of the study and indicated where the experimenter would be available on campus for private conferences should there be questions they did not wish to ask publicly. The debriefing form also contained phone numbers of local agencies which had agreed to answer questions or to offer services to participants. The college counseling center of every campus visited was informed of the project and invited to name a sexual assault specialist whose name would be listed on the debriefing sheet and/or to send observers to the questionnaire administrations if desired.

Subjects

The final sample consisted of 6,159 persons including 3,187 women and 2,972 men students. The 3,187 woman participants were characterized as follows: M age = 21.4; 85% single, 11% married, and 4% divorced; 86% White, 7% Black, 3% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1% Native American; and 39% Catholic, 38% Protestant, 4% Jewish, and 20% other or none. The 2,972 male participants were characterized as follows: M age = 21.0; 91% single, 9% married, 1% divorced; 86% White, 6% Black, 3% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% Native American; and 40% Catholic, 34% Protestant, 5% Jewish, and 22% other or none.

Comparisons with National Enrollment Data. Four variables were examined to determine the extent to which this sample was representative of U.S. higher education enrollment: institution location and region, subject ethnicity and income. Whereas the data on the present sample were collected between November, 1984, and March, 1985; the most recent information available on institution location and region is 1980 (Office of Civil Rights, 1980). The most recent information on the ethnicity and income of students is 1982-1983 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1985). Because of the assumptions on which the sampling plan was based (i.e., no schools under 1,000; no military schools; no graduate students) and the hesitancy to participate on the part of institutions, the sample is not absolutely representative. However, within the limitations of our assumptions, it is a very close approximation of the higher education enrollment. A comparison of the characteristics of the present sample to the characteristics of the entire U.S. higher education enrollment is presented in Table 2. (No tests of significance were performed because even minute differences would be statistically significant given the large population size).

Insert Table 2 about here

Region in which the institutions were located was the only variable on which significant discrepancy was noted. The present sample overrepresented the proportion of students who are enrolled at institutions in the Northeast and Southwest and underrepresented students enrolled at institutions in the West. These discrepancies reflected irremediable difficulties in obtaining institutional access to some locations. For example, in the West a personal visit was made by a member of the Ms. staff to an institution, the efforts of the Affirmative Action Director of the California State University System were enlisted, a prominent member of the clergy made personal calls to private schools, the first author called the Women's Studies directors at target schools, and special re-reviews were obtained at two major California universities. Nevertheless, after 15 months of time only 3 institutions had agreed to allow data collection. Therefore, it was decided to proceed with data collection without full representation from western schools. The regional disproportion is unimportant in many respects since even without extensive sampling in the West, the individual participants in the sample were still reflective of national enrollment in terms of ethnicity and family income. Nevertheless, for purposes of calculating prevalence data, weighting factors were used.

The present sample was weighted using the proportions of higher education enrollment in each of the federal regions. These data are found at the bottom of Table 2. Whereas 12.7% of the present sample were attending institutions in the Northeast, only 6.3% of the national enrollment is represented by that region. Hence, the responses from students at these institutions were weighted to be equivalent to 6.3% of the present sample. Likewise, the responses of the 20.6% of the sample that came from Southwestinstitutions were weighted to be equivalent to 9.8% of the sample. Finally, only 6.0% of the subjects in the present sample were attending western schools whereas 18.3% of the nationwide enrollment is in the West. Therefore, the responses from subjects in the West were weighted to be equivalent to 18.3% of the present sample. Later, both weighted and unweighted prevalence figures will be presented. It will be observed that the effect of weighting was very small and generally rendered the prevalence figures slightly more conservative.

Measurement of Sexual Aggression/Victimization

Survey Instrument. All data were obtained via a self-report questionnaire titled, "National Survey of Inter-Gender Relationships." (This title was selected to be neutral and to avoid the word "sex" so that participants did not prejudge the content before explanations were given). The questionnaire consisted of approximately 330 questions divided into seven sections. The content included participant demographics, sexual experiences before the age of 14, sexual experiences after the age of 14, family and social history, current behavior, and psychological characteristics. Only the data on the incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization after the age of 14 are reported here.

The data on the incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization after the age of 14 were obtained through the use of the 10 item Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss & Oros, 1982; Koss & Gidycz, 1985). This survey has been described as a self-report instrument that is designed to reflect various degrees of sexual aggression and victimization and is capable of identifying hidden rape victims and offenders from among a "normal" population. During actual administration separate wordings were used for women and for men. However, for purposes of demonstration, the female wording is presented in the following sample and the male wording is indicated in parentheses: "Have you ever had sexual intercourse when you (the woman) didn't want to because a man (you) used some degree of force--such as twisting your (her) arm or holding you (her) down?". The text of all 10 items (female wording) can be found in Table 3 which is described fully in the results section.

Reliability and Validity Studies. Internal consistency reliabilities of .74 (women) and .89 (men) have been reported for the Sexual Experiences Survey and the test-retest agreement rates between administrations one week apart was 93% (Koss & Gidycz, 1985). Many investigators have questioned the validity of self-reported sexual behavior however. The accuracy and truthfulness of self-reports on the Sexual Experiences Survey was also investigated by Koss and Gidycz (1985). The Pearson correlation between a woman's level of victimization based on self-report and her level of victimization based on responses as related to an interviewer was .73 ($p < .001$). Most importantly, only 3% of the women (2/68) who reported experiences that met legal definitions of rape were judged by interviewers to have misinterpreted questions or to have given answers that appeared to be false. The Pearson correlation between a man's level of aggression as described on self-report and as given in the presence of an interviewer was .61 ($p < .001$).

A further validity study was conducted in conjunction with the present study. Male students were selected as subjects since previous work had raised more questions about the validity of their responses than about the validity of female students' responses. The Sexual Experiences Survey items were administered to subjects both by self-report and by one-to-one interview on the same occasion and in one setting. Subjects were 15 male volunteers, identified by first name only, recruited through newspaper advertisements on the campus of one of the institutional participants, a major university. The study took two hours of time and the men were paid $10 for participation. All subjects were juniors or seniors and psychology majors were eliminated from consideration. This precaution was taken to reduce the possibility that the interviewer would know any of the participants because surnames were not made available to him for review. The demographic characteristics of the participants were as follows: M age = 21.3; 100% single; 87% white, 13% minority; 27% Catholic, 27% Protestant, 27% none or other, 20% Jewish; 40% family incomes > $35,000. These demographic characteristics closely parallel those of the men in the national sample.

Participants gave their self-reports first. Then, they were interviewed individually by a fully trained, licensed, and experienced male Ph.D. clinical psychologist. The interview questions focused on the participant's experiences with sexual aggression both before and after the age of 14. The intent of these questions was to match the participants' verbal responses with their self-reports on the Sexual Experiences Survey. The results indicated that 14 of the participants (93%) gave the same responses to the Sexual Experiences Survey items on self-report and in interview. The one inconsistency involved an individual who admitted a behavior on self-report which he later denied to the interviewer. On average subjects rated their honesty as 95% and indicated that the reason for lack of full honesty was time pressures getting through the questionnaire.

Scoring the Survey. Because individuals may have experienced several different degrees of sexual aggression/victimization, summing the percentage of persons who report each individual act gives an inflated estimate of the total number of sexually aggressive/victimized persons. Therefore, a categorical scoring system was derived to classify respondents in terms of the most severe sexual aggression/victimization they reported. Five classes of sexual aggression/sexual victimization were developed including: no sexual aggression or victimization, sexual contact, sexual coercion, attempted rape, and rape. On the basis of their responses to the Sexual Experiences Survey, all respondents were classified into one of these

groups. The groups labeled "rape" (yes responses to items 8, 9, and/or 10 and any lower numbered items) and "attempted rape" (yes responses to items 4 and/or 5 but not to any higher numbered items) included individuals whose experiences met legal definitions of these crimes. The legal definition of rape in Ohio (similar to many states) is the following: "...Vaginal intercourse between male and female, and anal intercourse, fellatio, and cunnilingus between persons regardless of sex. Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete vaginal or anal intercourse...No person shall engage in sexual conduct with another person...when any of the following apply: (1) the offender purposely compels the other person to submit by force or threat of force, (2) for the purpose of preventing resistance the offender substantially impairs the other person's judgment or control by administering any drug or intoxicant to the other person..." (Ohio Revised Code, Supp. 1980, 2907.01A, 2907.02).

The group labeled "sexual coercion" (yes responses to items 6 and/or 7 but not to any higher numbered items) included subjects who engaged in/experienced sexual intercourse subsequent to the use of menacing verbal pressure or misuse of authority. No threats of force or direct physical force were used. The group labeled "sexual contact" (yes responses to items 1, 2, and/or 3 but not to any higher numbered items) consisted of individuals who had engaged in/experienced sexual behavior such as fondling or kissing that did not involve attempted penetration, subsequent to the use of menacing verbal pressure, misuse of authority, threats of physical force, or actual physical force.

Results

The Prevalence of Sexual Aggression/Victimization

The unweighted response frequencies for each item of the Sexual Experiences Survey are presented in Table 3. These data represent the percent of the sample that reported that they had engaged in/experienced each sexually aggressive act at least once since the age of 14. The frequencies of victimization ranged from 44% of women who reported having experienced unwanted sexual contact subsequent to coercion to 2% of women who reported having experienced unwanted sexual intercourse subsequent to misuse of his authority. The frequency with which men reported having perpetrated each form of sexual aggression ranged from 19% of men who said that they had obtained sexual contact through the use of coercion to 1% of men who indicated that they had obtained oral or anal penetration through the use of force. Respondents indicated that they had had multiple exposures to each experience. Those respondents who had engaged in/experienced sexual aggressive acts indicated that each form of

sexual aggression had occurred a mean of 2.0 - 3.2 times since age 14. The unweighted item response frequencies and the mean and standard deviation for the number of times a behavior was reported are contained in Table 3

Insert Table 3 about here

The data on the individual sexually aggressive acts are difficult to interpret, however, because persons may have engaged in/experienced several different sexually aggressive acts. Thus, the sum of the percentages of people who report experience with the individual acts exaggerates the total number of persons who have been sexually aggressive/victimized. Therefore, responses to the individual items were collapsed according to the categorical scoring system described earlier. In this system, an individual is counted only once and classified according to the highest degree of sexual victimization/ aggression they reported. Using weighted data to correct for regional disproportions, 46.3% of women respondents revealed no experiences whatsoever with sexual victimization while 53.7% of women respondents indicated some form of sexual victimization. The most serious sexual victimization ever experienced was sexual contact for 14.4% of the women; sexual coercion for 11.9% of women; attempted rape for 12.1% of the women, and rape for 15.4% of the women. Weighted male data indicated that 74.8% of men had engaged in no forms of sexual aggression whereas 25.1% of the men revealed involvement in some form of sexual aggression. The most extreme level of sexual aggression ever perpetrated was sexual contact for 10.2% of the men, sexual coercion for 7.2% of the men, attempted rape for 3.3% of the men and rape for 4.4% of the men. Weighted and unweighted prevalence rates for sexual aggression and victimization are found in Table 4. Comparison of the weighted and nonweighted data reveals that the effect of weighting was very small.

Insert Table 4 about here

The relationship of prevalence rates to the control variables used to define the sample was also examined. No significant differences in the prevalence of sexual victimization were found according to the size of the city where the institution of higher education was located ($X^2 = 5.55$,

p= .697), the size of the institution (X^2 = 6.35, p= .608), the type of institution (X^2 = 10.37, p= .240), or whether the minority enrollment of the institution was above or below the national mean (X^2 = 4.03, p= .401). However, rates of sexual victimization did vary by region (X^2 = 63.00, p= .001) and by the governance of the institution (X^2 = 22.93, p = .003). The rate at which women reported rape was twice as high in private colleges (14%) and major universities (17%) as it was at religiously affiliated institutions (7%). Reported victimization rates were higher in the Great Lakes(19%) and Plains States(19%) than in other regions.

The relationships between prevalence rates of sexual aggression and the control variables were nonsignificant for city size (X^2=6.41, p=.600), institution size (X_2 = 3.76, p= .878), minority enrollment (X^2 = 4.84, p= .303), governance (X^2 = 13.66, p = .091), and type of institution (X^2 = 3.99, p = .858). The only control variable that was related to the prevalance rate of sexual aggression was region of the country (X^2 = 56.25, p= .001). The rate at which men admitted raping was twice as high in the Southeast (6%) as in the Plains States (3%) and three times as high as in the West (2%).

The Incidence of Sexual Aggression/Victimization

Even when consideration was limited to the previous year, some subjects reported multiple episodes of sexual aggression/victimization on the survey. Therefore, the incidence of sexual aggression/victimization was calculated two ways. First, the number of people who reported one or more episodes during the year was determined. Second, the total number of incidents that were reported during the year were calculated. For example, intercourse through physical force was experienced by 63 women during the 12 months previous to the survey. These 63 women reported 98 incidents in which they were physically forced to have sexual intercourse. If the individual acts are collapsed into levels of sexual victimization, they reveal the following incidence rates for a one year period in a population of 3,187 women: 353 rapes, (207 victims), 533 attempted rapes (323 victims), 837 episodes of sexual coercion (366 victims), and 2,024 experiences of unwanted sexual contact (886 victims).

The use of physical force to obtain sexual intercourse against a woman's will during the previous 12 months was reported by 20 men. These men revealed 36 occasions on which they had used force to obtain sexual intercourse. If the individual acts are collapsed into levels of sexual aggression, the following incidence rates are obtained for a one year period in a population of 2,972 men: 187 rapes (96 perpetrators), 167 attempted rapes (105 perpetrators), 854

episodes of unwanted sexual contact (374 perpetrators), and 311 situations of sexual coercion (167 perpetrators). These data are presented in table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

Victimization studies such as the NCS include estimates of the victimization rates per 1,000 individuals for each crime. The rate of rape during a six month period per 1,000 women aged 16-19 is 3.9 and aged 20-24 is 2.5 (BJS, 1984, p. 24). From the present data, victimization rates can be calculated. If all women among the 3,187 surveyed who reported during the previous year one or more individual sexual experiences which met legal definitions of rape and attempted rape are totaled, divided by two, and set to a base of 1,000; the victimization rate for the present population of women was 83/1,000 women. However, the FBI definition of rape (i.e., forcible vaginal intercourse with a female against consent by force or threat of force including attempts) on which the NCS is based is narrower than the state laws (i.e., oral, anal, vaginal intercourse, or penetration by objects against consent through threat, force, and intentional incapacitation of the victim via drugs) on which the present study was based (BJS, 1984). Therefore, the victimization rate was also calculated in conformance with the FBI definition. Using only those women who reported one or more individual sexual experiences that involved actual or attempted vaginal sexual intercourse through force or threat of force, a victimization rate of 38/1,000 was obtained.

"Perpetration" rates were also determined using the male data. When all unwanted oral, anal, and vaginal intercourse attempts and completions were included in the calculations, a perpetration rate of 34/1000 was obtained. Use of the FBI definition resulted in a perpetration rate of 9/1,000 college men during a 6 month period.

These rates represent minimum estimates because they treat as a single victimization any multiple occurrences during the year. In the NCS, multiple episodes (i.e., "series victimizations") are counted separately if the victim is able to recall each episode in detail. The present data did not allow the differentiation of series and single victimizations.

Descriptive Characteristics of Hidden Rape Among College Students

To facilitate comparison with other sources of victimization data, information was sought from the 477 women respondents who reported an experience that met legal definitions of rape. These respondents indicated that 95% of the rapes involved a single perpetrator acting alone. Approximately 84% of the perpetrators were an acquaintance; 57% were dating partners. At the time of the rape the women were a mean of 18.5 years old and 41% were virgins. Only 58% of the victims told anyone about the rape. While just 27% of the women viewed their experience as rape, an additional 16% viewed it as a crime other than rape. Nevertheless, only 5% reported their experience to the police. Fully 41% of raped women expect to experience a similar victimization again in the future.

Information was also sought from the 131 male respondents who reported an act of sexual aggression that met legal definitions of rape. They reported that 84% of the rapes in which they participated involved one offender only. In 84% of the situations, the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim; 61% were dating partners. At the time of the rape the men were a mean of 18.5 years old and 12% were virgins. Only 46% of the men told anyone about the experience. Just a single man viewed his behavior as rape, while 84% of the men whose reported behavior met legal rape definitions stated that it definitely was not rape. In fact, 47% of the perpetrators expect to engage in a similar act of aggression again in the future.

Discussion

In the present study, behaviorally specific items regarding rape and lesser degrees of sexual aggression/victimization were presented in a noncrime context to an approximately representative national sample of students in higher education. The results indicated that 15.4% of college women reported experiencing and 4.4% of college men reported perpetrating since the age of 14 an act that met strict legal definitions of rape. An additional 12.1% of women reported experiencing and 3.3% of college men reported perpetrating an act that met legal definitions of attempted rape. Thus, a total of 27.5% of college women were victims of rape or attempted rape and 7.7% of college men have perpetrated these sexually aggressive acts. Virtually none of the rape victims or perpetrators had been involved in the criminal justice system. Consequently, the experiences of these young people qualify as "hidden rape" which would not be reflected in official crime statistics such as the Uniform Crime Reports (e.g., FBI, 1985).

A victimization rate for women of 38/1,000 was calculated. This figure represented the number of women per thousand who experienced a rape during the previous six months that met the FBI definition. This rate is 10-15 times greater than the estimated rape victimization rates that are based on the NCS (BJS, 1984) which are 3.9/1,000 for women aged 15-19 and 2.5/1,000 for women aged 20-24. This finding strongly suggests that studies such as the NCS fail to document the true scope of sexual victimization among young women. A corresponding "perpetration rate" of 9/1,000 college men was also reported. This figure represented the number of men per thousand who admitted involvement during the previous six months in an act of rape that met the FBI definition. Even men's rate of admitting to raping was 2-3 times greater than NCS estimates of the risk of rape for women between the ages of 16-24.

The characteristics of the rapes described by respondents in the present study differed from those summarized in official statistics. For example, NCS results have suggested that 65-75% of the rapes of women ages 16-24 involve strangers and 27% involve multiple offenders (BJS, 1984). In the present study, the vast majority of rapes involved close acquaintances or dates and relatively few involved multiple offenders. These findings suggest that acquaintance rapes, reported in high numbers in the present study, are not being elicited by questions such as those used in the NCS that incorporate the words "rape" and "attack" and surround the questions with a context of violent crime.

The findings of the present study demonstrated that men do not admit enough sexual aggression to account for the number of victimizations reported by women. Specifically, 54% of college women claimed to be sexually victimized but only 25% of college men admitted any degree of sexually aggressive behavior. The number of times that men admitted perpetrating each aggressive act was virtually identical to the number of times women reported experiencing each act. Thus, the results of the present study failed to support notions that a few extremely sexually active men could account for the victimization of a sizable number of women. Clearly, some of the victimizations reported by college women occurred in earlier years and were not perpetrated by the college men who were surveyed. In addition, some recent victimizations may have involved community members who were not attending college. Future research must determine whether these explanations can account for all of the sizable difference in rates. Whereas empirical evidence collected in the present study suggested that those sexual experiences which are revealed are true, it is possible that some relevant sexual experiences are not reported by men. Such withholding could be intentional, but it may also be found that men and

women differ in their perception of the degree of force and coerciveness that was involved in particular sexual encounters.

A complex pattern of regional differences in the prevalence of sexual aggression/victimization was found. For example, women in the Plains states reported the highest rate of rape, but men in the Plains states admitted to raping less often than men in other regions. On the other hand, men in the southeast reported the highest rate of raping whereas women in the southeast reported the lowest rate of rape victimization. The meaning of these results could not be fully interpreted on the basis of data analysed in the present study. Future analyses are planned of other data available on the sample including ethnicity, personality characteristics, and situational characteristics of the sexual aggression/victimization. It is possible that the scores on some or all of these variables will also differ regionally which will help explicate the variation in prevalence rates.

The results of the present study documented that few women reported their rape to police, few sought formal victim assistance services, and many told no one at all about their experience. The observation that so many victims did not receive assistance services suggests that current outreach efforts are not very effective. Only future research can evaluate the extent to which these large numbers of untreated, hidden, and silent rape victims experienced traumatic aftereffects and recovered successfully. Most published research on rape victims utilized samples of rape victims recruited from rape crisis centers or police records. The generalizability of existing research on rape impact and recovery to the much larger group of hidden victims cannot be assumed without futhur study.

The findings of the present study establish the existence of hidden rape and suggest the magnitude of the problem. They transform rape and lesser degrees of sexual violence from heinous but rare events into normative experiences in the lives of women. Recently, the editors of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, issued by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, noted that there is an "... increasing awareness in the public health community that violence is a serious public health problem and that nonfatal interpersonal violence has far-reaching consequences in terms of morbidity and quality of life...(December 13, 1985, pp. 739).

The prevalence rates for sexual victimization/aggression were robust and did not vary extensively from large to small schools, across types of institutions, or among urban areas, medium sized cities, and rural areas. The ubiquity of sexual aggression and victimization

supports Johnson's (1980) observation that, "It is difficult to believe that such widespread violence is the responsibility of a small lunatic fringe of psychopathic men. That sexual violence is so pervasive supports the view that the locus of violence against women rests squarely in the middle of what our culture defines as "normal" interaction between men and women" (p. 146). Future research must devote attention to the preconditions that foster sexual violence in our society. In addition, it has recently been suggested that, "Productive research and prevention efforts might be developed around another relatively new focus for public health--the concentration on perpetrators of abusive behaviors, rather than the traditional concentration on victims" (Centers for Disease Control, December 13, 1985, p. 740).

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Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics of Higher Education Institutions: United States and Present Sample

Control Variable	Number of Institutions	Percent of Total	Number in Sample Plan	Actual Sample
I. Location				
Not in SMSA	643	32	11	10
SMSA < 1,000,000	706	35	13	8
SMSA > 1,000,000	649	32	11	14
II. Region				
New England	140	7	3	2
Mideast	374	19	6	5
Great Lakes	334	17	5	7
Plains	172	9	3	3
Southeast	442	22	8	7
Southwest	183	9	5	4
Rocky Mountain	60	3	1	1
West	259	13	4	3
III. Minority Tally				
Below mean	1451	73	25	23
Above mean	547	27	10	9
IV. Governance				
Public	1307	65	23	23
Private	392	20	7	7
Religious	299	15	5	2
V. Type				
University	156	8	7	16
Other 4 year	1013	51	15	11
2 year	829	41	13	5
VI. Size				
1,000-2,499	843	42	14	6
2,500-9,999	820	41	14	10
>9,999	335	17	7	16

Table 2

Control Variables: Present Sample Compared to U.S. Higher Education Population

Control Variable	Present Sample 1984-1985 Percent	U.S. Higher Education Enrollment 1980-1983[1,2] Percent
I. Location		
Not in SMSA	31.0	32.0
SMSA < 1,000,000	25.0	21.0
SMSA > 1,000,000	44.0	47.0
II. Ethnicity		
White	86.0	82.4
Black	7.4	9.6
Hispanic	3.4	4.4
Asian	2.8	2.7
Native American	.7	.7
III. Income		
$0-15,000	13.4	16.7
$15,000-25,000	17.2	16.2
$25,000-35,000	22.5	19.8
>$35,000	45.7	46.3
IV. Region by Number of Institutions		
New England	6.2	7.7
Mideast	15.6	19.4
Great Lakes	21.9	15.9
Plains	9.4	10.2
Southeast	21.9	22.7
Southwest	12.5	7.5
Rocky Mountain	3.1	2.8
West	9.4	12.1
V. Region by Percent of Enrollment		
New England	12.7	6.3
Mideast	12.4	18.0
Great Lakes	17.6	18.3
Plains	9.4	7.4
Southeast	16.8	18.8
Southwest	20.6	9.8
Rocky Mountain	4.4	4.0
West	6.0	18.3

[1] U.S. Department of Education, 1980 (data for region and location).

[2] U.S. Department of Commerce, 1985 (ethnicity based on data from 1982; income based on data

Table 3

Specific Acts of Sexual Aggression and Victimization:

Prevalence Since Age 14

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	WOMEN			MEN		
	% Yes	M Times	S.D.	% Yes	M Times	S.D
1. [illegible]	44	3.2	1.5	19	2.9	1.5
2. [illegible]	5	2.7	1.7	1	2.5	1.5
3. [illegible]	13	2.1	1.5	2	2.3	1.5
4. [illegible]	15	2.0	1.4	2	2.0	1.2
5. [illegible]	12	2.0	1.4	5	2.2	1.4
6. [illegible]	25	2.9	1.6	10	2.4	1.4
7. [illegible]	2	2.5	1.7	1	2.0	1.4
8. [illegible]	8	2.2	1.5	4	2.5	1.5
9. [illegible]	9	2.2	1.5	1	2.3	1.5
10. [illegible]	6	2.2	1.6	1	2.5	1.5

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Table 4

Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization:

Weighted and Unweighted Rates

SEXUAL AGGRESSION/VICTIMIZATION	WOMEN N=3187		MEN N=2972	
HIGHEST LEVEL REPORTED	Percent Reporting		Percent Reporting	
	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted
No Sexual Aggression/ Victimization	46.3	45.6	74.8	75.6
Sexual Contact	14.4	14.9	10.2	9.8
Sexual Coercion	11.9	11.6	7.2	6.9
Attempted Rape	12.1	12.1	3.3	3.2
Rape	15.4	15.8	4.4	4.6

Table 5

One Year Incidence of Sexual Aggression/Victimization

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	WOMEN N=3187		MEN N=2972	
	Victims	Incidents	Perpetrators	Incidents
Sexual contact by verbal coercion	725	1716	321	732
Sexual contact by misuse of authority	50	97	23	55
Sexual contact by threat or force	111	211	30	67
Attempted intercourse by force	180	297	33	52
Attempted intercourse by alcohol/drugs	143	236	72	115
Intercourse by verbal coercion	353	816	156	291
Intercourse by misuse of authority	13	21	11	20
Intercourse by alcohol/drugs	91	159	57	103
Intercourse by threat or force	63	98	20	36
Oral/anal penetration by threat or force	53	96	19	48